(b) and (c) No, Sir, However, a number of projects have been taken up for development of hilly, tribal, underdeveloped and backward areas of the country.

Rail connectivity to Jagdishpur

1296. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Jagdishpur is the second target town in Bhojpur district after Ara in Bihar, where seeds of independence were sown, do not have rail connection;

(b) if so, whether Government is considering for the same after celebrating 150 years of independence war of 1857; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Jagdishpur in Bhojpur district is not connected by a Railway line. However, Ara-Sasaram New Line, on completion, would provide rail connectivity to serve the people of this area as Jagdishpur is only about 20 km from this line.

Escalators at stations

1297. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has plan to install escalators at Secunderabad, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam railway stations in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so the steps proposed to complete such plans;

(c) whether Railways would provide trolleys for older people and physically challenged people at these stations; and

(d) in what manner Government would help passenger cross long distances at these railway stations alongwith the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU):

(a) and (b) Escalators are available at Vijayawada station. Escalators at Secunderabad will get included as part of its development as world class station. There is no proposal to provide escalators at Visakhapatnam station.

(c) and (d) Wheel chairs are available at Vijayawada, Secunderabad and Visakhapatnam station which can be used by older people and physically challenged persons. Such passenger can cross platforms by way of pathways provided at both ends of platforms at these stations. Foot-over-bridge (FOB) with ramp has also been provided for free movement of wheel chair.

Proposal to increase capacity of sleeper coaches

1298. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to increase capacity of 3-Tier sleeper coaches by at least 10 berths by re-designing coaches;

(b) whether it is a fact that safety organizations have objected to this proposal;